

It seems this is a place where people are not capable of thinking rationally.
Remember:

If America is not in decline, I want to believe America is not in decline.

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So let's ask, what does the future look like for America?

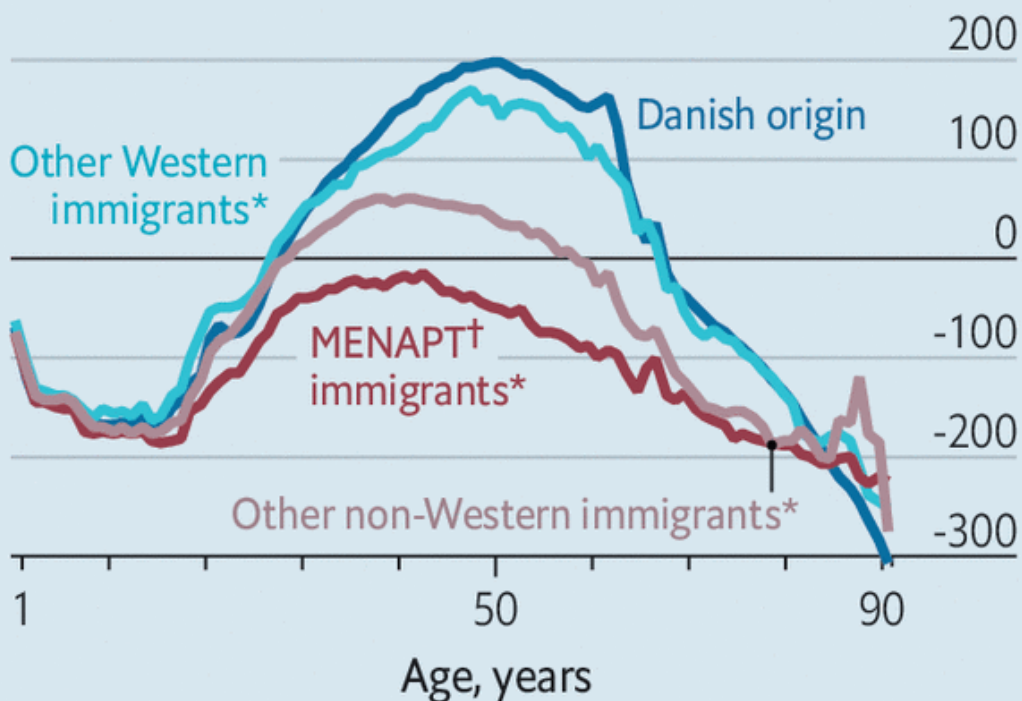
- Europe
 - Russia
 - South Africa
 - Something else
-

In **Europe**, [GDP per capita](#) has been stagnant since 2008. These countries started out at a very high point, so standards of living are still high and they can coast off of past economic success. Anecdotally, nobody starts a new company in Europe and the most ambitious leave, so there won't be growth from that any time soon.

Immigration appears not to offer good prospects either. The combination of unskilled immigration with expensive social welfare is suicide for your country. You need people you bring in to produce more than they consume, or you'll be in the poor house in no time, particularly given that people reproduce. See this chart for value contribution vs age of immigrants in Denmark.

It's complicated

Denmark, average net contribution to public finances, by age, 2018, DKr'000



Source: Danish Finance Ministry

*And their descendants †Middle East and north Africa, Pakistan and Turkey

The Economist

Coasting won't work either. The Airbus [A321](#) will be outcompeted by the Comac [C919](#). The Chinese will work harder for less money and accept a lower profit margin, the planes will cost half as much, and the world will switch.

Again, it hasn't gotten that bad there yet, and perhaps Europe can turn it around by rejecting clearly terrible policies. But if you have a population embracing degrowth, and I've seen this attitude from Europe over and over, soon you'll be poor. It's Hobbes vs Rousseau, and the "return to a state of nature" people are winning. I hope that state of nature is everything they hoped for.

In **Russia**, the oligarchs seized power when the Soviet Union collapsed. Privatizing the state meant all those with connections got to grab the old

wealth of the state. While the electricity in Russia still works (because the oligarchs are competent), [GDP per capita](#) has also been stagnant since 2008.






You see some aspects of this in America already. The state is mostly just a cow to milk for money by large corporations and friends of the state. Read the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), [CHIPS and Science Act](#), and the ironically named [Inflation Reduction Act](#) and it's hard to see them as anything besides the oligarchs looting the state and giving the money to their friends.

South Africa is the worst of the 3, with a notable drop in [GDP per capita](#) since 2011.

When you have [popular songs like this](#), it's not hard to see what's happened in the country. People often think Detroit became hell because the car industry left for right to work states, but it was actually two race riots in [1943](#) and [1967](#). After the second one, people had had it, and those with the means left. The people with means are generally also the people capable of producing value.

I saw a tweet like this: Our society wasn't brought down by the tyranny in 1984 or the hedonism in Brave New World, but instead by the resentment in Atlas Shrugged. Who supports reparations for slavery?

America is still the king of the technology industry. All of the programming languages and operating systems come from America. But this is not because Americans are particularly good at software, it's [because of immigration](#) and a merit based society. Historically, America has gotten the best software engineers from Europe, India, and China.

	Rank	Name	Market Cap	Price
☆	1	 Apple AAPL	\$ 3.518 T	\$231.41
☆	2	 NVIDIA NVDA	\$ 3.471 T	\$141.54
☆	3	 Microsoft MSFT	\$ 3.183 T	\$428.15
☆	4	 Alphabet (Google) GOOG	\$ 2.013 T	\$166.99
☆	5	 Amazon AMZN	\$ 1.971 T	\$187.83

These are the 5 largest companies in the world, and the main drivers of the American economy for the last 20 years. The best software engineers come to America, build great stuff, and everyone gets rich.

However, there's no reason this advantage stays in America. It's a whole lot easier to move software production than [steel production](#), and if standard of living declines in America (example: the crime is way higher than reported, anecdotally I have experienced car breakins, house breakins, and company breakins that haven't been reported) people will just start to leave. Skilled immigration is becoming more difficult, and no skilled person should put up with the current American immigration system.

I have been in Asia for the last 3 months, mostly in Hong Kong. This society is **functional**. The people in stores are helpful, the public transport is clean and fast, and not once have I felt unsafe walking alone on the street at night.

I'm seriously thinking about getting permanent residence and building tiny corp here instead of America. There's people I can speak to in the immigration department here, and I feel that the government is both competent and on the side of growth.

While there are some downsides with less political freedom, ask yourself how much that matters to you? Say compared to feeling safe on the street. While continuity of property rights and a stable business environment is super important to me, being able to agitate politically is not, and it might even be a negative (this is what lobbying is). Ask yourself how it has worked out for America?

Part of the safety issue may just be California, and I'll be [moving elsewhere](#) next year regardless. I have absolutely had it with the crime, it isn't a society and it's so sad to see. California has really screwed themselves, and I think a lot of people are at their breaking point.



If Trump wins and Elon has influence, I do think there is a path to fix America longer term. While the general Trump/Elon vibes are good, I do have concerns about Trump's fiscal record and protectionist tendencies. I will be watching two concrete things:

- Reducing the spend of the government
- Easy immigration for skilled workers

In 2023, the government spent \$6.2T. Will it be less in 2028? If so, how much? Will comma and tiny corp be able to easily bring in tax paying people for six figure software engineering jobs?

Of course if Kamala wins, I think I'll be staying in Asia. Managed decline with a side of resentment and looting oligarchs isn't for me.